

a consumable item supplying section configured to supply a variety of consumable items to a user upon request, said consumable item supplying section being connected to the consumable item keeping apparatus via a communication circuit;

a consumable item replenishment level setting device configured to set a consumable item replenishment level for the consumable item keeping apparatus;

a consumable item replenishment signal generating device configured to generate a signal indicative of arrival of the consumable items at the consumable item replenishment level; and

a consumable item order data transmitting device configured to transmit order data indicating a request for consumable items to be replenished to the consumable item supplying section via the communication circuit, when the consumable item replenishment signal is generated; and

a delivery data transmitting device configured to transmit delivery data of the consumable items from the consumable item supplying section to the user side.

11. (Amended) A consumable item keeping system as claimed in claim 9, wherein said inventory detecting device is employable regardless of a model and manufacturer of the image forming apparatus.

13. (Amended) A consumable item keeping system as claimed in claims 1, 2, 3 and 4, said consumable item data transmitting device is disposed at the user side.

17. A method for keeping consumable item, comprising the steps of:
setting a consumable item replenishment level for consumable items stored in a consumable item keeping apparatus at a user side;
generating a signal indicative of arrival of the consumable items at the consumable item replenishment level;
detecting the signal;
transmitting order data of consumable items to be replenished to a consumable item supplying section via a communication circuit, when the signal is detected; and
transmitting delivery data of the consumable item to be distributed to the user side.

20. (Amended) A consumable item keeping method as claimed in any one of claims 17, 18 and 19, further comprising a step of:
displaying information of the delivery data at the user side.

21. (Amended) A consumable item keeping system, comprising:
consumable item keeping means for storing a variety of consumable items at a user side;
consumable item supplying means for supplying a variety of consumable items to a user upon request, said consumable item supplying means being connected to the consumable item keeping means via communication means;
consumable item replenishment level setting means for setting a consumable item replenishment level for each consumable item;

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signal generating means for generating a signal indicative of arrival of the consumable items at the consumable item replenishment level;
signal detecting means for detecting the signal; and
consumable item order data transmitting means for transmitting order data indicating request for consumable items to be replenished to the consumable item supplying means via the communication means, when the signal detecting means detect the signal; and
delivery data transmitting means for transmitting delivery data indicating a consumable item distributing day and consumable item scheduled delivery day from the consumable item supplying means to the user side.

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23. (Amended) A consumable item keeping system as claimed in any one of claims 21 and 22, further comprising:
displaying means for displaying the delivery data at the user side.

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-23 remain active in this case, claims 1, 11, 17, 20, 21 and 23 having been amended and claim 7 canceled by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, claims 11 and 13 were rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention; claims 1, 3, 6-8, 10, 15-17, 19,